

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

At the outset, Applicant notes with appreciation that the Examiner has withdrawn the restriction requirement previously set forth, and has examined claims 18-33 on the merits.

To place the application in better form, Applicant has amended the specification to update the continuing application data, as requested by the Examiner. No new matter has been added.

Claims 20, 21, 23-26, 31 and 32 are presented for consideration. Claims 20, 23 and 31 are independent. Claims 18, 19, 22, 27-30 and 33 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to file a continuing application directed to the subject matter of these claims. Claims 20, 23, 26 and 31 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention. Support for these changes can be found in the original application, as filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 20, 21, 23-25, 31 and 32 were indicated as containing allowable subject and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of their base and intervening claims. To expedite allowance of this application, Applicant has rewritten claims 20, 23 and 31 in independent form, to substantively include the recitations of the base claims from which they previously depended. Applicant submits, therefore, that independent claims 20, 23 and 31, as well as claims 21, 24-26 and 32 variously depending therefrom, should be deemed allowable at the outset.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

The Examiner objected to a formality in the specification. As discussed above, Applicant has amended the specification to overcome this objection. Such favorable indication is requested.

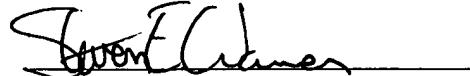
Claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that there was insufficient antecedent basis for the recitation in line 2 of that claim of “each lot of the substrate.” Without conceding the propriety of this rejection and solely to expedite prosecution, claim 26 has been amended in light of the Examiner’s comments. Accordingly, Applicant submits that this rejection has been overcome. Such favorable indication is requested.

Turning now to the art rejection, claims 18, 19, 22, 27-30 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,532,091 to Mizutani. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest many features of the present invention, as previously recited in these claims. Therefore, this rejection is respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, as discussed above, Applicant has rewritten allowable claims 20, 23 and 31 in independent form, in order to expedite allowance of this application.

Applicant submits that all pending claims, namely claims 20, 21, 23-26, 31 and 32 are allowable. Applicant submits, therefore, that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant requests favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early notice of allowance.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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